



UDC 821.511.111 + 821.113.6

**Helena Soini**

*Institute of language, literature and history,  
Karelian Research Center of RAS*

**“STONES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BAY...”  
SOME ASPECTS OF FINNISH POST-WAR POETRY IN FINNISH  
AND SWEDISH LANGUAGES\***

**For citation:** Soini H. “Stones in the middle of the bay...” Some aspects of Finnish post-war poetry in Finnish and Swedish languages. *Scandinavian Philology*, 2019, vol. 17, issue 2, pp. 318–333. <https://doi.org/10.21638/11701/spbu21.2019.209>

The article discusses the most stable and important images of stone and water in the post-war poetry of Finland in both Finnish and Swedish. Turning to these images, poets connect the modern perception of the world with mythological concepts. Each poet brings a personal attitude and national specificity to the rethinking of images. The literary sources and the continuity of artistic images are analyzed; the relationship of the “second” modernism poetry with the landscape and cultural tradition is investigated. So, some of the motives in the work of Thomas Eliot, who saw spiritualized matter in the image of a stone, are typologically similar to the poetic views of Finland’s writers. Some poets get accustomed to the image of a stone, identify themselves with it (Aila Meriluoto), others, like Ralf Nordgren, who writes in Swedish, treat him contemptively, taking the position of an outside observer. The connection of poetry with the landscape and domestic cultural tradition is investigated. Aila Meriluoto creates a number of stone images (“stone God”, “stone truth”, “stone humanity”). Poets following her either replenish this collection of “stones” or reject it altogether. The image of stone in Finland’s poetry is inseparable from the image of water. For Eeva-Liisa Manner, the poetic connection with water is “immersion in the mirror” of the lake, the fusion of the subject with the object, the person with the world. For Bo Carpelan, “to withstand the sea” means to go through darkness, to find oneself. The image of water, like the image of a stone, evolves from serious (primary matter, a substance that gives life) to humorous (a means necessary for taking medicine). The images of stone and water in the poetry

---

\* The study was carried out under state order No. AAAA-A18-118030190091-5.

of Finland are multifaceted. Poets interpret them differently. Poets bring new shades of feelings and give new meaning to the traditional mythological attitude.

**Keywords:** poetry of Finland in Finnish and Swedish, second modernism, images of stone and water, mythological concepts.

European literature goes through a lot of changes due to The Second World War. The society still recovers from the shock. Finland is in the state of political and economic uncertainty: what path to choose? What is the right way? The very same questions were raised in the Finnish poetry. As Matti Rossi once wrote in his “Spring 1945” (Kevät 1945): “*Maa huohottaa, sulatellen kuolleitaan*” (*Earth sighs for the dead as she digests them sadly*) [Rossi, 1975, s. 9].

At the first sight Finnish postwar poetry differs from anything written before both in Swedish and Finnish. Postwar poets began their literary path from abandoning previously dominant tradition: they discarded socially oriented and folkloric poetry. The most important thing was to discard all patriotic, government related and formalized topics. Finnish literary critic Kai Laitinen wrote that there was a revolution in the Finnish poetry, which resulted in abandoning history, deconstructing verse metres and discovery of European literature [Laitinen, 1980, s. 290].

Poets relinquished pro-governmental and militaristic ideas, they withdrew the society itself. Moreover, they didn't trust their history, even resented God.

Ken olet? Kauhistuen sinut nään:  
kivisen, liikkumattoman pään,  
ylpeät sieraimet hengittämättä,  
kivisen suun, kaks kivistä kättä,  
silmät — oi ei si t ä, armahda, auta!  
tyhjät ja sokeat silmät kuin hauta.  
Kivinen Jumala, elämää vajaa.  
Ei ole, ei ole pelastajaa!  
[Meriluoto, 1976, s. 18]

Who are you? I am terrified looking  
at you.  
Stone unmoving head,  
Breathless and proud nostrils,  
Stone mouth, two stony hands,  
Eyes — God be merciful! — No eyes!  
Empty and blind eyes, like tomb  
stones!  
Stone God, free from life.  
No savior, no!

Aila Meriluoto (1924) wrote “Stone God» (Kivinen Jumala) when she was 24 years old. This verse published in the verse collection “Stained-glass Windows” (Lasimaalaus, (1946 r.) represent pain, despair and hopelessness, which reigned among the people facing the aftermath of World War II. As Finnish critics would say, a poet figured out “collective unconsciousness”, she managed to construct “*modernistic and existential world*

view” [Toivonen, 1986, s. 119]. This is the historic and social background, which leads to the second wave of modernistic movement. The definition itself suggests a new stage of Finnish modernism, a symbolic baton passing from the first generation of modernists, i. e. Swedish expressionists of Finland, to the second one. Marja-Liisa Nevala indicates that Finnish postwar modernism is in fact Swedish expressionism of 1920’s reborn. “In Finland Swedish literature of 1920’s was the vanguard of all Scandinavia — writes M.-L. Nevala, — Finnish literature developed something alike only in 1950’s” [Kunnas, 1981, s. 3]. The second wave of modernistic movement continues to be of interest to both Russian and foreign scholars e. g. Eino G. Karhu, Kai Laitinen, I. S. Matashina, M.-L. Nevala, R.-M. Toivonen etc. It is believed that Finnish postwar modernism continued from 1945 to 1959, although it’s yet to be concrete. There are indeed a lot of studies concerning the time period.

It’s ought to touch upon the matter of differences and likeness of Finnish and Swedish perception. Our primal concern will be common images of postwar modernism both in Swedish and Finnish, national features of central images of water and stone and their evolution. We will also focus on images’ literary sources, their connection to landscape and cultural tradition, plus continuity of literary images.

First “expressionistic” wave of Finnish modernists of 1920–30’s was full of hope to change the world, “to cry so loud that the God could hear” (Katri Vala, 1901–1944) despite the consequences of First World War. Katri Vala takes the image of fire from the verses of neo-romanticists Eino Leino (1878–1926) and Johannes Linnankoski (1869–1913). Elmer Diktonius (1896–1961) believes in positive social changes in his poetry of that period. The first experiments in verses’ form began; a new way of versification is being constructed. Although Katri Vala is believed to be the first to use free verse, the final transition to free verse poetry happened in the 1950’s.

Deconstruction of the verse’s form was the easiest way to start with, so Finnish postwar poets did, which resulted in being trapped in European modernism. They discarded their own verses written with rhyme. The only guaranteed freedom was a freedom of a form. In the 1950–60’s all Finnish poetry was constructed in free verse. Even in the form of free verse, they continued to experiment: mixed fonts, blank pages, day-to-day language, made-up words. Of those many pioneers not many left a distinctive trace in literature: Lassi Nummi (1928–2012), Pentti Saarikoski (1937–1983),

Väinö Kirstinä (1936–2007). Nonetheless the job was done: traditional versification was deconstructed, pro-governmental ideas neglected and new idols proclaimed. Among those were English poet Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888–1965), Irishmen William Butler Yeats (1865–1939), James Joyce (1882–1941). “The Waste Land” (1922) by T. S. Eliot was released in Finland in 1949 with forewords of Lauri Viljanen and Kai Laitinen [Eliot, 1949]. Sweden was literary intermediary for Finland as much information about European literature passed through it [Karhu, 1984, p. 277]. Thomas Stearns Eliot is considered to be a pillar of European modernism, poet and literary critic. His poem “The Waste Land” is widely regarded as one of the most important poems of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was translated into Finnish with the foreword of the literature critic Tuomas Warburton and before that into Swedish in the same year of winning the nomination for Nobel Prize. The translation of the poem is believed to be the starting point of the second wave of modernistic movement in Finland. It’s interesting that perfecting poetry forms, poet is not obliged to discard tradition. In the essay “Tradition and Individual talent” Eliot writes: “Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence” [Eliot, 1986, p. 14].

In “The Waste Land” T. S. Eliot refers to the very wide range of literary work: “The Satyricon” by Gaius Petronius; reimagines the story of The Holy Grail and “The Golden Bough” by James Frazer. Thanks to allusions, reminiscences and other citations in different forms his poem is full of feeling of “present presence”. English historian A. L. Morton, who knew Eliot quite well, says that T.S. Eliot’s world view consists of traditional and modernistic perception at the same time [Zverev, 1979, p. 57]. V.M. Tolmachev adds: “Even if it is a traditional world view, it’s unique — symbolic” [Tolmachev, 2011, p. 29]. V.M. Tolmachev highlights Eliot’s point that “precisely the birth of ‘the really new’ creates the possibility to coexist with previous tradition thus creates ‘an ideal order’ of literary works” [Tolmachev, 2011, p. 35–36].

This point of view was close for Finnish literary men and readers of post-war period. Besides, some Eliot’s creative work motives seem to be typologically similar to Finnish poets’ ones. European modernism tends

to address tradition in many ways, but still tries to find a new way to express itself. Following Martin Heidegger “the key forms of the new philosophy (the world being interpreted in the language, language as a home for genesis) penetrate the artists’ and poets’ consciousness” [Dyachenko, 2009, p. 143]. Here the game of a form and contents becomes apparent. For example, Ezra Pound referred to peculiar forms of troubadours’ poetry which run to about 900 and Pound used them magnificently.

A very peculiar kind of poetry program of the “second modernism” became the abovementioned Aila Meriluoto’s poem “Stone God” (Kivinen Jumala). The image of a stone obtained a role of a peculiar baton between the idea of brotherhood of expressionists and the idea of abandoning brotherhood, faith and future of the second modernist.

Tartun käteesi, sisar ja veli.  
Mykkinä nousemme raunion alta.  
Autio maailma, synkkä kuin kaivo.  
<...>

sentään me nousemme, kivinen valta,  
rinnassa kivinen uhma ja raivo,  
nousemme uskoa, armoa vailla,  
nousemme huomista päivää vailla,  
mykkinä nousemme, kasvoin kovin,  
kasvoin kivisin, kivisin povin,  
kivisen Herramme lailla.

<...>

Jumala kiviset kasvonsa nosti.  
Mutta me kas voimme pimeän myötä,  
itsekin kiveä, itsekin yötä,  
harteilla totuus kuin graniittitaakka.  
Kivinen Jumala, heräit meidät,  
omaksi kuvaksen teit sinä meidät.  
Kylminä seisomme, huomiseen saakka  
[Meriluoto, 1976, s. 18–19]

Let’s take each other’s hands, sister and  
brother  
Silently rise up among the ruins  
Waste land, dark as a well

...

still we rise up, stone soil,  
with stone stableness and fury in the  
chest,  
we rise up without faith and mercy,  
rise up with no future,  
silently we rise, grown into men  
stonelike, with stone stride.

...

God rose up his stony face.  
We grew up in darkness too,  
we’re — stones, we’re — nights,  
we’ve learnt the truth, like tombstone.  
Stone God, you’ve awoken us,  
you’ve made us in the image of self,  
And we stand cold until the dawn.

The poetess creates a whole gallery of stone images: first and foremost it is the Stone God “free from life”, stone ground, stone truth and, finally, stone mankind: “*We are stones*”. Poets who followed Meriluoto would, to one degree or another, add to this collection of “stones” or reject it at all. The image of a stone, a lump, a cliff is one of the most popular in Finnish poetry. Moreover, it may even be as popular as the image of water — lake and sea. But in this context author takes into consideration the lifelessness of a stone, taking any kind of mysteriousness and vitality away from it.

Pirjo-Maija Toivonen notes in her dissertation the eyes, which don't see and the nostrils, which don't breath. [Toivonen, 1986, s. 119].

A stone is a unalienable part of nature, significant for Finland and Sweden. It has been and will always be — like God: was before us, will be after and is present now. But it has no life, according to Aila Meriluoto. This inexorable paradox reveals it's horror after war: "there is no savior", only stone. Nevertheless — a stone!

Of course, the image of a stone as a symbol of North is constantly appearing in poetry and art of people who live in the North. Ancient Icelandic poetry and north Russian epics are accustomed to the plot that was typical for ancient heroic epic poems — 'bogatyр'-giants turning into a stone.

It is said in the famous epic "Kamskoje slaughter" that Bogatyр Svяtogor turns into a mountain: in Russian folklore and epics at the end of their lives bogatyрs turn into a stone, leaving mountains, cliffs and granite lumps after themselves. This can be found in Edda's mythology, where giants are "half men, half mountains" [Steblin-Kamenskiy, 1976, p. 67]. Stones, mountains — they are, in a way, bones of the earth. Poetic Edda says about the first giant:

Of Ymir's flesh was earth created, of his blood  
the sea, of his bones the hills. [The Elder Eddas, p. 24]

In Poetic Edda's poems gods sometimes cannot defeat giants, but the light of a sunrise turns the underground inhabitants into stones. In the "Song about Helga the son of Hjörvard" the morning sun witnesses the giant Hrimgerd and her quarrel with warrior Atly. Atly stalls until the morning and the giant turns into a stone. In Younger Edda we read about giant Hrungrnir, who had his head and heart made of a hard stone. "*Giants of Russian epics, — writes Neonila Krinichnaya, — go underground in the end of their lives, into the mountain, turn into various types of fossils, leaving rather typical attributes after themselves: a range of granite lumps, a huge stone, moved from one place to another*" [Krinichnaya, 1987, p. 119–120]. According to her opinion, there is a connection between stones and the concept of totemic centers and totemic ancestors themselves. Russian artist Nikolay Roerich finds the way to the sources of art through understanding the culture of stone, as "stone remains always and still have heavenly origin" [Roerich, 1914, p. 138]. Poet and philosopher Vladimir Solovyov has another opinion on the image of a stone. This image obviously has negative connotation:

Где ни взглянешь — всюду камни,  
Только камни да сосна...  
Отчего же так близка мне  
Эта бедная страна?  
[Solovyov, 1974, p. 96]

Whenever you look, — only stones  
Only stones and some pines...  
Why do I love you so,  
My indigent homeland?

Poet loves indigent homeland despite it being full of stones, he praises his country, because the true human spirit that challenges heavens is born here.

Getting into the living of stone is one of the key features of Finnish poetry both in Finnish and Swedish.

Poets inflate traditional mythological world view with new feelings, they also bring new meaning and interpretation. Swedish poets like Ralf Nordgren (1936–2014) and Lars Huldén (1926–2016) bring humor and Meriluoto introduces the negativity of it. Meriluoto grows accustomed to the stone even identifies herself with it. The image of stone in popular Swedish poet's Ralf Nordgren interpretation evolves to be an observer or just a witness of different events passing by. Looking at the stone, poet mocks the image of it:

Ack, den som kunde  
vara som en sten.  
Ack, att ligga så.  
Opåverkad. Vila, ändå vara här.  
Jag lyssnar och förvånas.  
Vad är det den mänskan längtar från?  
[Nordgren, 1979, s. 46]

Oh, how to be like stone?  
Oh, lying so  
Unhewn.  
Resting. Still being here.  
I listen and wonder  
What's that the human dream of?

Although Meriluoto wrote “we’re — stones, we’re — nights, we’ve learnt the truth” (which refers to Jungian philosopher’s stone and Self as one of the Jungian archetypes, which only reveals itself only thorough the meeting with Shadow). Nordgren continues:

De andra stenarna säger  
att jag inte är någon riktig sten.  
En bit ur berget är du, säger de  
och vill knuffa mig ut ur muren  
Men de kan inte förmå sig att ge mig  
den sista stöten.  
Flera av dem vilar på mig.  
Så därför  
[Nordgren, 1979, s. 47].

The other stones, they say to me  
I am not the real one.  
You’re just a rock, they say  
they want to push me out of the stony  
wall,  
But they resolve to make a final move.  
Cause some of them rely on me  
That’s why.

Stone society tries to expel the lyric hero as Plato once did in his “Republic”. Although only one generation ago author of “Stone God” cried out for taking “each other’s hand, sister and brother”. Lassi Nummi sang “for all people” and picked the stone:

Nostan päältäni tätä kiveä, Kaikin voimin nostan. En hautakiveä: ... En muistokiveä: ... Tätä kiveä nostan jossa on merkitys ja merkityksettömyys, ... kaikki tämä mitä olisin voinut merkitä ihmisille, ja itselleni, ...Mielen kivi Joka painaa [Nummi, 2008, s. 319–320].	Raising up the stone, Lifting up above my head It’s not a tombstone, no ... No monument ... Awareness stone Of inanity That’s all I get to people and myself ... Anxiety, uneasiness and sorrow, the weight of emptiness and fullness, A mindstone, which weights.
--	---

But being human means being aware. A human who is aware of both sense and nonsense, in whom it coexists. Throughout realization a person connects with his inner self, becoming aware of his own inner archetypes. As for Heidegger “becoming aware of your own historicity, that you are mortal and free” [Nikolaeva, 2009, p. 170] is one of the key basis of existentialism.

A modernistic poet, who has lost his belief in the sense of history and progress, tries to find a way of not just going back to that traditional mythological perception, but also to grow accustomed to it right here and right now. T. S. Eliot in his poem “Choruses from ‘The Rock’” (1937) is playing with a Christian plot of laying the Christ’s Temple and the cornerstone. However his interpretation doesn’t seem to be Christian at all (although Eliot converted to Anglicanism in 1927), on the contrary, we can see many mythological attributes. At the very beginning the author introduces the reader to mythological paradigm:

O perpetual revolution of configured stars,  
O perpetual recurrence of determined seasons,  
O world of spring and autumn, birth and dying [Eliot, 1963, p. 147].

Initially, the idea of an eternal returning is an attribute of pre-Christian thinking. The new religion brings a new perception of



time — linear, eschatological. Moreover, it is significant that the piece itself was meant to be a mystery play — this genre appeals to antiquity (in relation to cult sacraments; for example, Eleusinian mysteries of Ancient Greece), but it was formed and remains in the Middle Ages. The choir lead says:

For I perceive approaching  
The Rock. Who will perhaps answer our doubtings.  
The Rock. The Watcher. The Stranger.  
He who has seen what has happened  
And who sees what is to happen.  
The Witness. The Critic. The Stranger.  
The God-shaken, in whom is the truth inborn [Eliot, 1963, p. 148].

Here we see the main character — The Stone. The Stone as a representation of Christ (“The Stone, which was rejected by builders, the same stone made itself the leader of a corner” (Mc 12:10)), The Stone as a manifest of God. It is, of course, not an idol from Meriluoto’s poem, but it seems rather impossible to call it strictly a Christian symbol. However, one shouldn’t forget that chants were written before the Second World War, and the poems from the collection “Stained-glass Windows” — during the War and after it. Risen from the ashes and standing on ruins and bones, Stone God is itself ashes, one can’t count on it — only on the very own powers of the man and human brotherhood, if it is still possible. Eliot represents the stone not simply as a symbol, but also as a spirited matter.

I have trodden the winepress alone, and I know  
That it is hard to be really useful... [Eliot, 1963, p. 148]

Isn’t it the antique pantheism? The Stone calls to the labour, to erecting a temple — not physical, but mystical, the temple inside a man. And in the course of this poem this action is coming to life, raising “the altar to Invisible Light”:

And we thank Thee that darkness reminds us of light.  
O Light Invisible, we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory!.. [Eliot, 1963, p. 171]

“Ecological” thinking dictates images to poets that have not been known to literature of previous generations. Ralf Nordgren identifies himself with a stone, through which the road was paved. The meaning of life of this stone hero is completed, he benefits the people:

En gång låg jag ostörd.  
Sedan drog de vägen.  
Igenom mig.  
Nu ligger jag på varsin sida om vägen.  
Det är så jag ser mig själv.  
Jag har gett rum för vägen  
[Nordgren, 1979, s. 48].

I lied untouched,  
They paved a road  
Through me  
Now I lie both sides  
That's the way I am  
Because of me the road exists.

According to Nordgren the stone is the foundation of everything, but the stone is a contemplator, everything moves around the stone, but it moves past it. Identifying himself with a stone, author inevitably reaches contemplation (let's remind ourselves that Eliot's Stone is called the Contemplator or the Observer (the Watcher, the Witness); "the man enters as a witness, watcher of the unity of being, to the reality of that exists ('second birth'). And this witness watches nothing but his unity with being" [Dyachenko, 2018, p. 21].

Den som börjar se stenar  
ser oss överallt.  
Det är mellan oss allt annat ligger.  
Det är förbi oss allt rör sig.  
Vi är de fasta punkterna.  
Vi är många.  
Vi är nästan allt.  
  
Mycket litet är därmed sagt om oss.  
[Nordgren, 1979, s. 50].

Who ought to see the stones  
Sees us everywhere  
Between us is all the matter.  
Past us goes all matter.  
We're the start of all.  
We're plenty.  
We're everything.  
  
Thus even less is told of up.

Nordgren stones philosophize; they argue with each other and even love one another:

Bredvid mig ligger en sten.  
Hon är vacker.  
Hon säger:  
Jag vill ligga bredvid dig,  
för alltid.  
Jag måste lära henne något  
om tillfällighetens vara  
[Nordgren, 1979, s. 37].

There's a pebble nearby  
so pretty  
She says:  
I want to be much closer.  
Always.  
I ought to say something  
about happenstance.

Märta Tikkanen (born 1935) is a journalist and a teacher who also identifies herself with a stone. But this is neither a game, aphorism, nor a joke anymore. The heroine is filled with "pieces of ice of hatred". In order to save her heart from destruction she builds herself "a shell of stone":

själv sten  
tror du att också dina  
känslor blir till sten  
[Tikkanen, 1985, p. 298].

The stone itself  
You think your feelings  
Become like stone.

There is no God in the world perception of lyric hero, but there is a human-stone in the center of all. Poets deprive “stony” European people of God and meaning of life itself. This kind of person needs salvation and poets do understand that.

But where to go? Is there a way to find creative power in “the land of thousand lakes”? The Stone God is silent and powerful, but cold and lifeless. There won't be any life without water and if in mythological perception of “Elder Edda” stone symbolizes bones of earth, the sea is its blood.

Among the traditional images of Finnish nature water is beloved most of all: “Veden alta näen // yhteisen maan” (I see the wholesome earth from under the water) [Kirstinä, 1979, s. 16]. This verse belongs to Väinö Kirstinä (“Life without assistant” (Elämä ilman sijaista, 1977). At the beginning of his career Kirstinä was fascinated by French Surrealism, the movement of Dadaism, he also translated some of verses of André Breton. Väinö Kirstinä is known in Finland as a poetic pioneer, creator of many poetic tables, drawings and diagrams. None other than Kirstinä made an attempt to “break” Finnish modernism, take it closer to the “prose of life”. He established rhythmic prose in Finnish literature, introduced ordinary and day-to-day things (like newspaper, car and drug names). The most important thing in Kirstinä's poetry is critique of urbanistic lifestyle.

Lyric hero of his verse is happy when he sees “enlightened earth, which is no longer frozen”. The only way is to be together with the nature: “Availen joen uomaa sohjosta sillan alapuolella, autan kevättä tulemaan...” (I open the way to the water, I help the spring come...) [Kirstinä, 1979, s. 262].

Historically people of Finland defined each other in reference to the water (either sea or lake people). Without any doubt Kirstinä belongs to the sea people, his world view is “salty”, “rocked by the waves”:

Meren keinunta, aaltojen valkeus,  
hiustesi sitoma avaruus.  
On kuljettava sinne.  
Missä taivaanranta ja leveä meri on  
yhtä  
[Kirstinä, 1979, s. 17].

A breath of sea, a light of waves  
Your hair intertwines with cosmos.  
I needed there,  
Between the line of sky and endless sea  
Where line of border disappear.

There is happiness for the poet, but sea stands between him and his love:

Olet meren takana,  
et palaa:  
yö odottaa  
[Kirstinä, 1979, s. 17].

You're out there, over the sea  
Not coming back:  
The night awaits.

Water as a mean of population growth mattered a lot for Finnish people. People “settled near lakes and rivers full of fish. Especially salmon, where was salmon, there were people, whose ancestors we call Finns”, — writes Stefan Moster in his essay “Diving into a mirror. Perception of Water in Finland” [Moster, 2018, S. 9]. Moster also adds that “Finns are famous for their knowledge of hygiene. They use trees and water to purify themselves” [Moster, 2018, S. 9]. In other words, they have sauna. Also, others interactions like water with light or water with wind are described. The title refers to the verse of Eeva-Liisa Manner (Manner, 1921–1995) who was one of the leaders of second modernism. It is called “In the morning at 5” (Aamulla kello viisi), the first lines of which are:

Vesi oli tyyni kuin peili,  
Suhkelsin peilin sisään...  
[Manner, 1980, s. 121]

Water was smooth as a mirror  
I dived into a mirror...

However Finland is not known only for its lakes. “It’s well known that Finnish literature associated only with lakes <...> but what about Swedish Finnish literature? One of the peculiar literary backgrounds for Swedish literature in Finland were images of sea and skerries” [Karhu, 1984, p. 29].

Sea always remained one of the most important route for trade and transport for both Finland and Sweden. Still sea appears to be of much more importance than just a transport route.

We can see the chaotic nature of water in the poem by Bo Carpelan (Carpelan, 1926–2011). Sound of the sea waves terrifies us reminding that chaos is a part of nature. It connects us with the inner Self, if we can bare such connection:

Uthärda havet,  
utan fyrrar.  
I döda fosfor glanser  
oandligt välvdä,  
hörs samma frasande  
samma orgelton  
Som i döda temple.

To bare the sea  
without a lighthouse.  
In lifeless and shiny reflections  
A twisting and endless  
You hear the sound of organ  
The very same sound  
You hear in a deserted temple.

Vad säger vindens kamrar ?  
 Vad upprepar minneta vågor?  
 Den slutliga föreningen.  
 Vilken slutlig förening?  
 Uthärda havet  
 [Carpelan, 1957, s. 35].

What whisper those tubes?  
 What repels the sound of water?  
 About the final junction.  
 What is a final conjunction?  
 To bare the sea.

One can make peace with oneself only if he meets true self. Eeva-Liisa Manner finds that peace by “diving into a mirror” thus subject becomes one with the object and human becomes one with the world around. Bo Carpelan interprets that process differently — it’s like merging with the darkness, according Heidegger — like diving into the abyss [Heidegger, 2004, p. 252]. Maybe the most important decision of all our life — decision to become human:

Hit har jag nått. Här går en gräns mellan  
 jord och hav: bränning mot bränning,  
 storm mot en tystnad, röd som maneten.

Here I made a decision. Here lies the  
 red border between sea and earth,  
 storm versus storm, tempest and silence

...

...

Hit har jag nått. Ett hav, ett avsked mot  
 mörker. En gräns mellan tystnad och  
 hemlighet. Vågskogar, brända karaveller,  
 ögon och ögonhålör vända mot drivande  
 stjärnor [Carpelan, 1996, s. 13].

Here I made a decision. The sea, I say  
 last words to ... darkness. The border  
 between silence and secret. Wavy  
 forests, burned down caravellas, eyes,  
 watching the glimmering stars.

To sum up, the image of water clearly or metaphorically establishes the connection between past and present. Even in the darkest hours when war and crisis kicks the ground off and you lose yourself among the society it underlines the importance of being present, being yourself, being resurrected.

Lars Huldén stresses “sea people’s” reverent attitude towards sea a little bit ironically:

Ur havet har allt land stigit upp.  
 De som bor vid havet har själva kunnat se  
 hur land har stigit upp och torkat sig  
 med gras  
 och börjat kla sig med skog.  
 Om havet en dag  
 skulle ängöra sig och börja återta sitt  
 land  
 skulle det betyda ganska mycket bekymmer  
 för Österbottens kustbefolkning  
 [Huldén, 1976, s. 122].

Earth came out of the sea  
 Those, who live close, may even see  
 How earth erected, weeding out,  
 And forests grew  
 One day if sea takes back the earth  
 It will be bad for  
 Sea people of Osterbotten.

Huldén's verse is reminiscent of mythological worldview e. g. water symbolizes primal matter, which gifts life, but at the same time it's feared, because it can take life back. Lars Huldén is amongst group of most translated authors, he is also popular in Finland. His poems are full of humour, wit and skepticism. His ironic verses look like set expression. Amongst one of the most beloved topics is nature and human place in it. Huldén believes that human ought to go back to roots, become closer to nature, but he presents the idea ironically.

In the struggle between earth and water a sudden image of stone appears. The sea could be swallowed by the field, then Huldén writes:

Stenen mitt i viken  
skall engang kanske vara  
Stenen mitt i åkern.  
[Huldén, 1976, s.122]

Sea stones  
May one day  
Become field stones.

This small and simple verse appears to be full of semantic layers, one appears through another. A significant triad of images reveals itself: stone-water-field, which leads to another image of a human cultivating the earth.

Finally, Paavo Haavikko (Haavikko 1931–2008) in the poem “Twenty and one” (Kaksikymmentä ja yksi) is being sarcastic towards the sea. This poem is build on the model of Kalevala and tells us about Finns traveling to Byzantium. The sea is powerful and “rich because Sampo fell there” (meri pohatta,/kun samppu mereh kaatui) [Haavikko, 1974, p. 111]. In Haavikko's interpretation Sampo is a coin press.

Modernism existed in Finland from 1940's to 1980's. During that period poets didn't trust history, making their own imaginative world. At the same time the new world was born which they didn't notice. When poetry discarded reality, reality also discarded the poetry. One generation afterwards the poetry was successfully restored to people.

During 1970–80's a new tendency in poetry appeared. Literature embraced day-to-day topics, everyday words and phrases.

Thanks to the tradition of poetry clubs and readings, poets were presented with new goals of being easily interpreted, facing modern reality and its problems, caring more about family rather than politics. Poetry became more relatable, it has lost tendencies of being overmetaphorical or diving deep straight to archetypical images. The image of water evolved from relating to primal matter and substance which gifts life to some water you wash the drug down with: “Juon yskänlääkettä ja vettä,

poltan puoko savuketta” (I cough. I swallow medicine for my throat and wash it up with cigarette smoke water) [Kirstinä, 1979, p. 262].

At the same time the first sigh of a new poetry being born is negation of those stone feelings of a human stone. “We are living poets, — the young proclaims — We are not stones!” The very same title can be seen on Enni Haukio’s collection of verses, who also takes part in one famous rock band. “We are not stones!” [Haukio, Fox, 2007] is written in English. Multilinguality appears to be one of the many features and problems of modern poetry.

## REFERENCES

- Carpelan B. *Landskapets förvandlingar*. Helsingfors: Schildts, 1957. 74 s.
- Carpelan B. *Novembercredo. Dikter i urval 1946–1996*. Helsingfors: Schildts, 1996. 301 p.
- Dyachenko I. A. About religious-philosophical basis of T.S. Eliot’s literary work “Choruses from ‘The Rock’”. *Uchenye zapiski. PetrGU*. 2018. No. 1 (170). P. 17–23. (In Russian)
- Dyachenko I. A. In defence of the poetry (based on the poem “In Memory of W.B. Yeats”, “The Maker” and “The Cave of Making”. *Profil: zarubezhnaya filologiya v gumanitarnom diskurse*. Petrozavodsk: Izd-vo PetrGU Publ., 2009. P. 140–155. (In Russian)
- Eliot T. S. *Autio maa. Neljä kvartettia ja muita runoja*. Keuruu, 1949. 182 s.
- Eliot T. S. *Collected poems, 1909–1962*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963. 221 p.
- Eliot T. S. *Selected Essays*. London: Faber & Faber, 1986. 468 p.
- Haavikko P. *Kaksi kymmentä ja yksi*. Helsinki: Otava, 1974. 112 s.
- Haukio J., Fox K. *We are not stone*. Middlesbrough: Ek Zuban Publ., 2007. 92 p.
- Heidegger M. What Are Poets For? *Poetry in Theory: An Anthology 1900–2000*. Oxford, Blackwell, 2004. 666 p.
- Huldén L. *Långdansen. Dikter. 1958–1976 i Urval*. Jakobstad: Schildts, 1976. 166 s.
- Karhu E. G. *20<sup>th</sup>-century Finnish poetry*. Petrozavodsk: Kareliya Publ., 1984. 320 p. (In Russian)
- Kirstinä V. *Runoja 1958–1977*. Helsinki: Tammi, 1979. 294 s.
- Krinichnaya N. A. Russian folk historical prose. *Voprosyi genezisa i strukturyi*. Leningrad: Nauka Publ., 1987. 232 p. (In Russian)
- Kunnas M.-L. [Nevala]. Muodon vallankumous. *Modernismin tulo suomenkieliseen lyrikkaan*. Pieksämäki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura, 1981. 218 s.
- Laitinen K. *Suomen kirjallisuuden historia*. Helsinki, 1980. 676 s.
- Manner E.-L. *Runoja 1956–1977*. Helsinki: Tammi, 1980. 532 s.
- Meriluoto A. *Kootut teokset*. Porvoo; Helsinki: WSOY, 1976. 622 s.

- Moster S. In den Spiegel tauchen. Wassererfahrung in Finland. *Jahrbuch für finnisch-deutsche Literaturbeziehungen*, Nr. 50. Chefred. I. Schellbach-Kopra, 2018. S. 9–29.
- Nikolaeva O. O. The evolution of the topic of guilt in the 1920s-1930s German philosophy. *Profil: zarubezhnaya filologiya v gumanitarnom diskurse*. Petrozavodsk: PetrGU Press, 2009. P. 166–182. (In Russian)
- Nordgren R. *Stensamling*. Helsingfors: Schildts, 1979. 78 s.
- Nummi L. Kaikki elämän valo. *Runot 1996–2007*. Helsinki: Otava, 2008. 472 s.
- Roerich N. K. *The Joy to art*. Book 1. Moscow: Izd-vo I. D. Sytina Publ., 1914. P. 116–154. (In Russian)
- Rossi M. *Rautalammin laulut*. Helsinki: Tammi, 1975. 77 s.
- Solovyov V. S. *The poems and comedy plays*. Leningrad: Sovetskiy pisatel Publ., 1974. 324 p. (In Russian)
- Steblin-Kamenskiy M. I. *Mif*. Leningrad, 1976. (In Russian)
- The Elder Eddas of S. Sigfusson and the Younger Eddas*. London; Stockholm; Copenhagen; Berlin; New York: Norrosn society Publ., 1906. 348 p.
- Tikkanen M. [Dikten] Still wie Licht in windloser Gegend. *Lyrik aus Finnland in Antologie in Finnisch/Schwedisch und Deutsch*. [Ed.] I. Schellbach-Kopra. Karlsruhe: Loeper, SKS, 1985. P. 298–303.
- Toivonen P.-M. Aila Meriluodon varhaislyriikan modernismi ja sen tausta. *Jyväskylä, Jyväskylän yliopisto*. 1986. 292 s.
- Tolmachev V. M. T. S. Eliot. *Vestnik PSTGU Sh. Filologiya*. 2011. No. 1 (23). P. 7–64. (In Russian)
- Zverev A. M. *Modernism in American literature: formation, evolution, and crisis*. Moscow: Nauka Publ., 1979. 320 p. (In Russian)

Елена Сойни

Институт языка, литературы и истории Карельского научного центра РАН

«КАМНИ ПОСРЕДИ ЗАЛИВА...»

НЕКОТОРЫЕ АСПЕКТЫ ПОСЛЕВОЕННОЙ ПОЭЗИИ ФИНЛЯНДИИ  
НА ФИНСКОМ И ШВЕДСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ\*

Для цитирования: Soini H. "Stones in the middle of the bay...". Some aspects of Finnish post-war poetry in Finnish and Swedish languages // Скандинавская филология. 2019. Т. 17. Вып. 2. С. 318–334.  
<https://doi.org/10.21638/11701/spbu21.2019.209>

В статье рассматриваются образы камня и воды, центральные и наиболее устойчивые в послевоенной лирике Финляндии как на финском, так и на шведском языках. Обращаясь к этим образам, поэты связывают современное восприятие мира с мифологическими представлениями. В переосмысление образов

---

\* Исследование проводилось при поддержке гранта № АААА-А18-118030190091-5.



каждый поэт привносит личностное отношение и национальную специфику. Анализируются литературные источники и преемственность художественных образов в поэзии «второго модернизма». Так, некоторые мотивы в творчестве Томаса Элиота, видевшего в образе камня одухотворенную материю, являются типологически сходными с поэтическими взглядами литераторов Финляндии. Одни поэты вживаются в образ камня, отождествляет себя с ним (Айла Мерилуото), другие (Ральф Нордгрен, пишущий по-шведски), относятся к нему созерцательно, занимая позицию стороннего наблюдателя. Исследуется связь поэзии с ландшафтом и отечественной культурной традицией. Айла Мерилуото создает ряд каменных образов («каменный Бог» «каменная правда», «каменное человечество»). Поэты, следующие за ней, пополняют эту коллекцию «камней» или отвергают вообще. Образ камня в поэзии Финляндии неотделим от образа воды. Для Эвы-Лизы Маннер поэтическая связь с водой — это «погружение в зеркало» озера, слияние субъекта с объектом, человека с миром. У Бу Карпелана «выдержат море» — означает пройти сквозь тьму, обрести самого себя. Образ воды, как и образ камня, эволюционирует от серьезного (первоматерия, субстанция, дающая жизнь) до юмористического (средство, необходимое для приема лекарства). Образы камня и воды в поэзии Финляндии многогранные. Поэты трактуют их по-разному. В традиционное мифологическое мироощущение поэты приносят новые оттенки чувств и придают новый смысл.

**Ключевые слова:** поэзия Финляндии на финском и шведском языках, второй модернизм, образы камня и воды, мифологические представления.

**Helena Soini**

Professor, Doctor,

Institute of Language, Literature and History of Karelian Research Centre RAS,

11, Pushkinskaya ul., Petrozavodsk, 185910, Russia

E-mail: elenasoini@gmail.com

**Сойни Елена Григорьевна**

доктор филологических наук, ведущий научный сотрудник,

Институт языка, литературы и истории Карельского научного

центра Российской академии наук,

Россия, 185910, Республика Карелия, Петрозаводск, ул. Пушкинская, 11

E-mail: elenasoini@gmail.com

Received: August 9, 2019

Accepted: September 16, 2019